

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., today said, "I have nothing but good thoughts and fond memories of former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm who died yesterday at age 80. Even as a small seven-year-old child I remember her running for President in 1972. Even at such a young age I was aware that she was the first African American to run for our highest office. She blazed the trail for my father running in 1984 and 1988. She was an extraordinary person who will remain a beloved and historic figure in American history.

"In 1964 Shirley Chisholm won a New York legislative seat where she served in the General Assembly from 1964 to 1968. As a progressive, she proposed a bill to provide state aid to day-care centers and voted to increase funding for schools on a per-pupil basis. In 1968 she campaigned to represent New York's 12th Congressional District, won, and became the first African American woman elected to Congress. Her campaign slogan reflected her spirit: 'Fighting Shirley Chisholm--Unbought and Unbossed.'

"During her first term in Congress, she hired an all-female staff and spoke out on civil rights, women's rights, the poor and against the Vietnam War. She was a popular public speaker and a co-founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW). She remarked that, 'Women in this country must become revolutionaries. We must refuse to accept the old, the traditional roles and stereotypes.'

"On January 25, 1972, Shirley Chisholm announced her candidacy for President and said: 'I stand before you today as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States. I am not the candidate of black America, although I am black and proud. I am not the candidate of the women's movement of this country, although I am a woman, and I am equally proud of that. I am not the candidate of any political bosses or special interests. I am the candidate of the people.'

"The 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami was the first major convention in which any woman or African American was considered for the presidential nomination. Although she did not win the nomination she received 151 delegate votes. She continued to serve in the House of Representatives until 1982, retiring from politics after her last term in office. She was a trailblazer and triumphant spirit. Her legacy burns bright and her example will always be remembered," Jackson concluded.